



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Driving Indiana's Economic Growth

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 18, 2007

New US 31 Howard County Project Receives Final Federal Approval

Decision paves the way for initial design and 2009 groundbreaking

Kokomo, Ind. – Today Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman announced the Indiana Department of Transportation has received a Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for a new bypass around Kokomo. The ROD allows the US 31 Howard County project, one of the largest in Indiana's innovative Major Moves highway construction program, to advance to design and land acquisition for a 2009 construction start.

"This is a major milestone for the citizens of Indiana, especially those who routinely fight traffic in and around Kokomo," said Lt. Gov. Skillman. "The fifteen signals that disrupt the free flow of traffic around the city will soon be gone. Dozens of dangerous intersections that contribute to higher than normal accident rates will be a thing of the past. Because of this and other Major Moves projects, motorists using US 31 from Indianapolis to South Bend will have smooth sailing through the entire corridor."

Governor Mitch Daniels' Major Moves highway program will invest more than \$1 billion to upgrade US 31 between Indianapolis and South Bend, with new construction in St. Joseph, Howard and Hamilton counties. It represents the largest investment of Major Moves funds in the entire road construction program. The second largest, the I-69 extension between Evansville and Indianapolis, is receiving \$700 million in Major Moves funding. The new Kokomo bypass will start construction in 2009 at a cost of \$345 million.

"This new highway will save time and allow economic development to flourish," Skillman added. "Northern and central Indiana will become even more attractive to businesses who want to establish or expand their operations. Good transportation infrastructure will help us keep the good paying jobs we already have, and allow us to add thousands of new ones."

The ROD is a determination by FHWA that the project has passed the environmental review process. INDOT will hold public meetings over the next two years to discuss the highway's design and receive input from citizens.

“We’re very glad to have reached this important milestone,” said Bill Rinard, Deputy Commissioner of INDOT’s Greenfield District. “Now the hard work of designing and building this bypass can begin. With Major Moves the state has the funding, a construction start date and a firm commitment to build this project.”

Major Moves fully funds more than 200 new construction and 200 major highway preservation projects across Indiana over the next ten years. It unlocks economic opportunities for Hoosiers and will leave a legacy for Indiana to be the global leader in distribution and logistics.

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